Dear Chairmen and Members of the CGA Appropriations Committee,

I am concerned by the overarching changes which have been made to the state of Connecticut via legislators on Union actions; these changes are not an action for the People of Connecticut.

The proposed resolutions contain a number of problematic elements, including how:

(1) The deal is structured to hide its total price tag, ignoring both the cost of a full year's worth of raises and the overall effect on state pension debt. Based on the limited information presented to lawmakers, the cost of would be well over $1 billion in the first twenty-seven months alone.

(2) The deal consists of a $1,000 bonus and an additional $2,500 "special lump sum payment" for full-time employees. Besides the full amount of $3,500 in bonuses, the deal would as well award raises averaging more than 15 percent between now and July 2023 on top of raises that averaged about 11 percent between 2019 and 2021.

(3) The state would grant unions new powers to pressure new employees into joining, forcing managers to leave the room during orientation sessions and requiring state agencies to print a monthly list of the workers who chose not to join.

Significantly, the healthcare and pension benefits for the unions are covered by a separate ten-year contract last negotiated in 2017, yet the unions and state negotiator elected not to modify its main terms in parallel with these contract talks for the current deal. Therefore, the bonuses, backpay, and raises delineated in the proposed resolutions come while the state leaves intact a complement of benefits that increasingly exceeds private-sector norms.

State workers have already received across-the-board raises of 3.5 percent in July 2019, followed by increments—seniority-based raises—in January 2020. Despite the state's tenuous fiscal position in the early months of the coronavirus pandemic, another set of 3.5 percent raises automatically went through in July 2020, and another set of increments came into effect at the beginning of 2021. Overall, the raises totaled about 11 percent during one of the most difficult economic periods in Connecticut's history. From a broader perspective, since 2000, the State of Connecticut's payroll, as measured by federal economic officials, has climbed faster than both inflation and Connecticut's private-sector payrolls, the individuals largely responsible for financing state government. According to the QCEW, Connecticut's state government payroll totaled $9.6 billion more (2022 dollars) between 2000 and 2020 than it would have if the payroll had grown at the rate of inflation.

I urge you to represent the People of Connecticut, whereby you make the best choice for the People of Connecticut, and not for a union.

Vote NO for any and all abusive actions to the People and the Treasury of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Francis-David Athelstan Scalzo
Madison, CT